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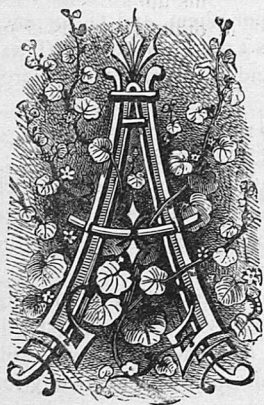
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# ART NEEDLEWORK

## EMBROIDERY MATERIALS AND DESIGNS.



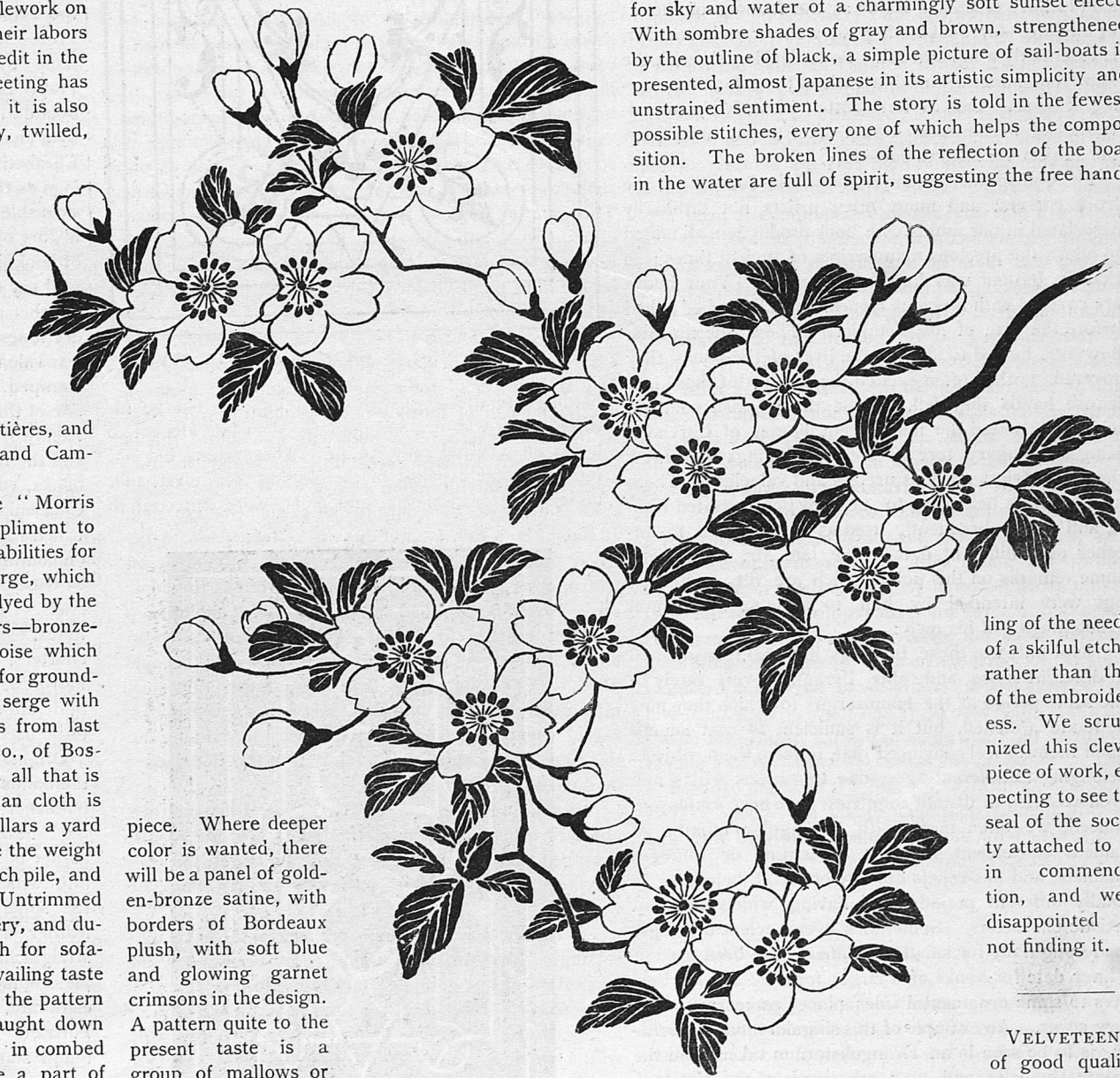
NATURAL curiosity about arrasene, Bolton sheeting, and other embroidery materials led me to improve a recent opportunity to examine them. The arrasene I found a fine chenille, as soft as "zephyr" wool, well adapted for rich materials and showy work, and not, as many have been led to think from its name, a stout thread for working wall-hangings and tapestry. It is gorgeous in cushion-work, where it is best used on a ground of plush, in which glowing mallows and roses are imbedded, even with the pile of the plush, not raised, as in chenille embroideries, commonly known. The effect of the sunken work is as much richer as it is less pretentious than the bolder style, although the new material does not seem to be highly recommended by connoisseurs in embroidery. Bolton sheeting, however, is one of the standard artistic materials, pleasing in every sense, and adding the grace of durability. Ladies planning needlework on this fabric have the satisfaction of knowing their labors will endure for their own use, and do them credit in the eyes of their children after them. This sheeting has long been in domestic use in England, where it is also known as "butler's linen," being a heavy, twilled, wide household fabric, "half bleached" to that creamy softness of hue dear in all napery. It is washable and wearable, well suited for lawn tennis dresses, morning-gowns, artists' aprons (badge of the feminine part of the profession!), or the blouses so much worn about the house. Its popularity may be inferred from the fact that not a shred or scrap of Bolton sheeting could be found recently in all Boston! From this we may anticipate an outbreak next spring of Bolton curtains, portières, and piano-covers throughout æsthetic Boston and Cambridge.

In default of the coveted sheeting, the "Morris cloth" is brought forward, named in compliment to the English decorator, who first saw its capabilities for artistic use. It is a heavy, wide woollen serge, which hangs in as faultless folds as velvets, and is dyed by the Morris house in all the choice artistic colors—bronze-green, tawny brown, dull red, the turquoise which blends with pink, and dead-leaf shades, fine for grounding. Turkish satin, a rather light wool serge with glossy satin face, is well known for draperies from last year's importations by R. H. Stearns & Co., of Boston, whose embroidery department contains all that is freshest and most select in taste. Turcoman cloth is out of common reach by its price—seven dollars a yard—but is a noble material, silken, and double the weight of the thickest momie-cloth, with a rough rich pile, and sometimes tinsel twisted with the silk. Untrimmed and unembroidered, it is a handsome drapery, and durable upholstery. Fashion seizes on plush for sofa-cushions and chair-seats, in which the prevailing taste is to surround it with a border of cluny lace, the pattern filled with silk in colors and gold thread caught down to the cloth, and finished by a row of tassels in combed wool of various colors. These tassels are a part of every piece of drawing-room work, not hanging from the edge as a fringe, but over the cloth, to punctuate a scallop or relieve a band of dark plush.

As for patterns, the mallow is a favorite flower with English designers, and well adapted to decoration, with its range of colors, as rich as those of hollyhocks or chrysanthemums, while its bells droop with more grace than the one, and are not so bold as the other. My compliments to both chrysanthemums and hollyhocks notwithstanding! What should we do without the

rose and snow and gold of the starry-disked flower in our winter rooms, and what other plant blooms with such Venetian splendor in cottage gardens as the hollyhock? I shall never forget how superbly it blossomed last August, in perfect, sumptuous color, against the gray palings of Gloucester gardens, in that beautiful, rambling old town by the sea. Such creamy golden buff, between bells of maroon and dead crimson; with a bloom of velvet and a light-like fire in the lucent petal, struck through by the western sun! Flowers bloom in that moist salt air with a luxury and prodigality unknown to more favored climates, and in consummate colors which would teach a decorator more than the Japanese. Yet how coarsely the hollyhock is always painted, by those who have not marked the marvel of its tones in congenial gardens!

The change in colorings fancied for ornamental work is delicate yet distinct, and disregard of this subtle rendering stamps the goods at many a gay-hung stall at fairs as out of date and unsalable. The shades affected in all designs are the whitest turquoise, which only blends with the array of clover pinks and ivory yellow (quite another tinge from ivory itself), sage-greens, and russets, which copy the shades left in old needlework. These tints are sure to be repeated in the fan-stitch borderings and rows of combed tassels of almost any



JAPANESE EMBROIDERY DESIGN.

piece. Where deeper color is wanted, there will be a panel of golden-bronze satine, with borders of Bordeaux plush, with soft blue and glowing garnet crimsons in the design. A pattern quite to the present taste is a group of mallows or geraniums, shading from pink to deep red, with bluish-green

leaves in Kensington work on a golden-bronze plush. Antique reds and pinks, purple harebells and Canterbury bells with autumn-altered foliage, from pallid green to bronze, like leaves in old tapestry, are found in many of the handsome patterns.

Printed momie-cloth in sage-green or bronze grounds has the pattern filled in Kensington stitch and couching

with crewels, a work in vogue for panels, curtains, and piano-backs. Very light materials joined with very heavy ones are seen in the same piece of work; thus, a cushion with centre of Madras muslin is worked in "fade" silks and gold thread, with a wide border of garnet plush, gay with fan-stitches, spangles and tassels which repeat the litany of fashionable colors. Scrim-cloth worked in light colors is a great deal used, both for draperies and aprons, or broad collars and cuffs for artistic costumes, worked in shaded crewels or antique silks. For decorative pieces, it usually has a border of cluny lace over dark cloth, filled in color, with a wide heading of garnet or bronze plush and tassels!

The richest work must not be forgotten. It uses the stamped or ciselé velvet, filling the incised pattern with natural-hued silks and gold and beads, producing stuffs like the superb stiff Italian altar-pieces. This work is mostly for cushions and rich borders for drapery.

SHIRLEY DARE.

A DECORATIVE panel in outline needlework, admirably designed and executed, the work of one of the contributors of the New York Society of Decorative Art, has lately been added to the objects on exhibition at the rooms of the society. A ground of old gold sheeting, divided by a line for the horizon, gives the color for sky and water of a charmingly soft sunset effect. With sombre shades of gray and brown, strengthened by the outline of black, a simple picture of sail-boats is presented, almost Japanese in its artistic simplicity and unstrained sentiment. The story is told in the fewest possible stitches, every one of which helps the composition. The broken lines of the reflection of the boat in the water are full of spirit, suggesting the free hand-

ling of the needle of a skilful etcher rather than that of the embroideress. We scrutinized this clever piece of work, expecting to see the seal of the society attached to it, in commendation, and were disappointed in not finding it.

VELVETEEN, if of good quality, makes an excellent ground for screen panels,

chair-covers, portières, curtains, borders, etc. It can be worked in the hand, if the embroidery be not too heavy or large in style. Utrecht velvet is only suitable for coarse crewel or tapestry wool embroidery. It is fit for curtain dados or wide borderings. Velvet cloth is a rich plain cloth, finished without any gloss. It is a good ground for embroidery, either for curtains or altar-cloths.